

IN MEMORIAM NASRI FOUAD ATALLA (1934-2007)

Barbara A. Porter



Nasri Atalla had a long career promoting the interests of Jordan and held important positions in the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. In 1976 he became the Director of Development and Planning for the Ministry and from 1985-1995 he served as the Secretary General. During those years, he ensured that many essential projects were initiated. He was also a proponent of exhibiting Jordan's archaeological treasures abroad as exemplified by several very successful museum exhibits documented by excellent catalogues, namely in France (1986-87), Germany (1987-89) and England (1991).

Within Jordan, he presided over the restoration of many significant sites. Some of the projects were realized through assistance from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the American Center of Oriental Research in 'Amman (ACOR). These projects include the rest houses at Pella and Umm Qays; the restoration of the Great Temple on the 'Am-

man Citadel; Islamic 'Aqaba (Ayla); the Madaba Archaeological Park; and the Petra Church Project begun in 1992. His foresight in enlisting the necessary financial and technical support should be noted as well as his devotion to the natural beauty of Jordan. He made great efforts to protect such sites as Wādī Ramm, Mt. Nebo, and Mukāwir. Nasri Atalla felt strongly about careful development of tourism in Jordan and the fact that the private sector had to be encouraged to play roles in preservation and promotion.

His personal background prepared him well for his career. He was born in Haifa. His family moved to Lebanon in 1948 and later to Jordan. He went to the United States for his undergraduate studies and received his BA from Georgetown University in the Foreign Service School (1961). In his college graduation year, he joined the Jordanian Diplomatic Corps and served from 1961 to 1968 in the Jordanian Embassy in Washington as the Press Attaché.

When he returned to 'Amman, Atalla served as the Assistant Chief of Royal Protocol at the Royal Palace from 1968 to 1970. This led to his becoming the Personal Secretary to HM King Hussein from 1970 to 1976. During that time he also managed to pursue graduate work at Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He again studied at Harvard at the Business School in 1976.

He received many awards in his lifetime and was honored to receive from HM King Hussein the Medals of Independence: Third Degree (1965); Second Degree (1989) and First Degree (1994) as well as ones from foreign governments (Austria, France, Italy, Spain, and Morocco) that recognized his endeavors to support and promote culture. Nasri Atalla — often called Tony — had a wide circle of devoted friends, who miss his

sophisticated humor and generous hospitality. He is also survived by his sister Maroussia, his wife Barbara, and his children — Fouad, An-

drea, and Lara — as well as four grandchildren.
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